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OREGON

*Starving since 1989 / Volume 22 issue VI*

VOICE

ART ISSUE

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If you ask an art student “what is art?” they might tell you that it is a set of principles that defines aesthetic quality in relation to things like color, spatial balance and unity. A philosophy student might roll their eyes and laugh at this question, thinking back on endless hours of tearing through Heideggerian essays that define art in a set of absurdly confounding properties. If you’re on that Abstract Expressionism kick, that canvas covered in black hair is simply brilliant. If you’re a Dadaist, maybe that urinal over there really is a water fountain. If you’re Plato, art might scare the shit out of you. No matter how we define art, most of us inherently understand and relate to some form of it, and it is for this reason that the OREGON VOICE keeps bringing back the Art Issue since 1989\*.

Though we think that every issue is a work of art, the Art Issue is different. We put out an open call for submissions back in the winter and have been playing Curator of the OREGON VOICE Museum ever since. This issue is supposed to be the easy one that all comes together in the blink of an eye, but it never happens that way. No, you cannot rush art, even when it’s just sorting through other people’s art.

So, how ‘bout that week nine? If you’re anything like me, you’re probably producing your best art right now amidst term papers and studying for exams (“This paper can wait, I’m just so inspired!”). If you’re a senior like me, I can imagine that you are increasingly inebriated by all that a Eugene spring has to offer, wondering where you’ll be this time next year, the places you’ll go, the people you’ll meet, and how much you’ll miss this campus and hard paper copies of the OREGON VOICE.

May this Art Issue be a happy supplement to those sunny days in which life and art are synonymous, spent pondering the open possibilities of impending summertime and/or graduation. If art imitates life and life imitates art, then life is art (especially if you get into the whole representation-reality binary thing... which I’ll spare you). Hey, look at that! You’re an artist and you didn’t even know it.

DADA!

*Cara*

“I cannot conceive any work of art as having a separate existence from life itself.”  
–Antonin Artaud

\*The OREGON VOICE has not, in actuality, put out an Art Issue every year since 1989.

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CHART 1.



A PICTURE OF GOOD HEALTH

art ARIEL WILLIS



photo TAYLOR ENGEL



# THE ILLS WE SUFFER

words **NOAH WOLF-PRUSAN**

One long, dour man loped along the street,  
clutching a bouquet of daffodils for his wife.  
The hot lemon-yellow afternoon sun that stung  
his balding forehead paused for the cool wind.

A marshmallow cloud lazed across the sun  
and threw a shadow upon the oak-lined street.  
The man shivered in his sweat and turned east  
to find his raven-haired wife walking towards him.

It began to rain before she had gotten to him,  
a summer squall rushed from the mouth of  
what were once quiet clouds. The tired man  
glanced at his wife, who frowned, of course.

He looked up into the falling rain and let the crisp  
water cool his head. He lifted the sodden flowers  
to his wife, who took them, and their eyes met.  
Eyes of winter grey saw his and he shuddered.

A quick, aerobic dance of jagged fire struck  
the air that separated the couple, hurling  
them unto the concrete. Strangers ran to help  
the man stand up, his eyes buzzed with white fire.

Only, she did not stand up.  
The man limped to his wife, whose body  
was ragged against a storefront. He took her head  
into his hands and lost his mind in her pale face.

Her hair had turned ivory to match her skin,  
ruby blood dribbled from a wound that split  
the crest of her head. The man let out a shout  
when he glimpsed a glint of something wholly unnatural.

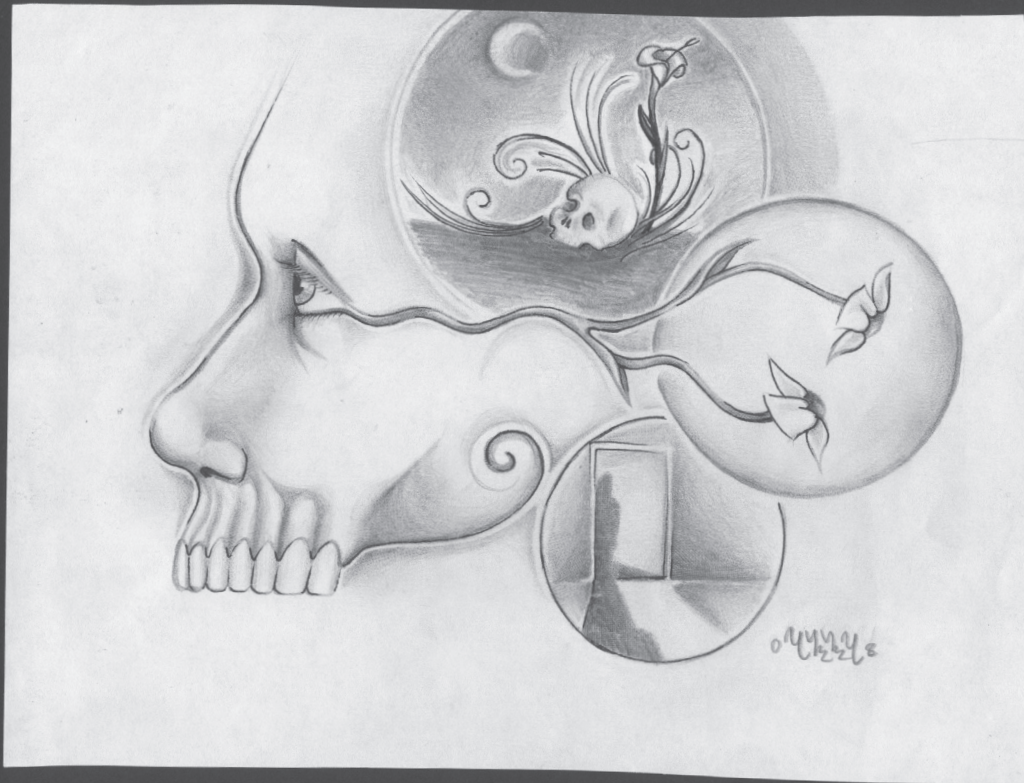
Onlookers, like devil's agents, shifted slowly  
towards the lightening-struck couple, the man  
holding his burnt out wife while he uttered curses.  
They saw what he saw, with green tongues they  
encouraged him.

His fingers trembled as they pulled apart the scalp.  
the skin easily lifted off of the bone with a sucking sound.  
the wind had stopped and the air was eerily tranquil.  
All eyes were on the long man's shaking hands  
as he clutched the woman's hair. What he found beneath

the skin was not the expected white bone,  
rather it was a skull of pure diamond.  
There was a gasp in the crowd, and then  
all at once the mob collapsed on the man and his wife.

He fought hard to protect his wife.

art ANNA PAULETTE





# FLASHLIGHTS

words **AZUL DAHLSTROM-  
ECKMAN**

We are the most intrepid  
generation yet  
Because we adventure with  
flashlights in our pockets  
Extended forward,  
Blasting light into the  
cavernous unknown  
Knowing all, feeling nothing  
We may recede into perpetuity  
Yearning for a more eloquent  
past  
When those who were  
inspired were heard  
And whose safety was unsure

art **BRAEDEN COX**





art **JOSH KENNETT**



# THE DRIP EFFECT

words **MICHAEL SOLOMON**

Boomer was a bar friend before I knew there were such things as bar friends. Overall he wasn't much. More of a cardboard cut-out that responded. But that was ok. It's what he didn't have that made him my friend.

Recently, I had graduated from college and was mostly embarrassed about it. To feel more adult, on the weekdays, I would go to the bars. One was called Bee's Wax. Another was called Lucky's. Mine and Boomer's bar was the Casbah.

We would hit cue balls all night, Boomer and me. Placing a scuffed white ball in a sea of green velvet, swinging a 21-ounce stick, transferring force over to luck and seeing which pockets were made — if we kept from thinking a certain way about it, anything free really felt like something to do.

"When we were at our best, me and my girlfriend would watch the gay network," Boomer says drinking a pint up against the railing, looking at everyone else but talking to me. "You knew things were good then. 'RuPaul's Drag Race.' '1 Girl 5 Gays.' When those shows were on, she forgot all about things, and we could have sex to 'Absolutely Fabulous.'"

Things meant the time that Boomer had cheated on his ex in his mom's van parked in front of his mom's house.

I pull the cue ball from the hole and set it up so I can hit it again. Through the speakers there's stadium rock playing. Around us is a familiarity like déjà vu feels like sinking. The vibe is that we don't belong — that youth is not a compatible donor here — and our attitudes are that yes, we don't like us either.

The top of Boomer's head turns like a bush scanning for babes. "I think it had something to do with me being more open. Like if I could watch gay stuff, then all of a sudden I was a sensitive guy or something. I've never been a sensitive guy," Boomer adds.

It's dim in the room, but made lighter by the lack of people in it. Those who are here have numbers seen in neon above their heads. The numbers count the days down retroactively and signify an approach to an end. It seems that the main reason people are in here is to watch the other's number tick down.

"And what about keeping a boner when two dudes are

talking about anal? You can do that, my friend, and I'll give you a Boyfriend of the Year award."

The way we act is the way of two actors off stage but still being watched. Our voices were broadcasted live. Our movements were obligations to the eyes that followed them. What we knew was that we were performers, and what we acted was that we did not know it.

From the table next to ours, I hear someone say getting divorced, having babies, and being arrested in the same sentence.

"All's I'm saying is this, if gay television can't save you, do you really want to be saved?"

For some reason, what I say is, "Bitter doesn't make better," and Boomer responds with a suck of beer through the gap in his front teeth.

The suck of beer is for his anger. His UNDER THE INFLUENCE t-shirt is supposed to attract and at the same time distract from any lacking of personality. Him running a hand through the curls in his hair is aimed at the hotish bartender with her blank stare behind the bar.

I knew these things because our friendship was based on speculation and not based on friendship. Maybe none of it was true. Maybe he wasn't the person I had imposed upon him. Maybe I was wrong. But I didn't need to be because in the end we both got what we wanted.

With all the inflection of "fuck you," Boomer asks, "So how's living at home?"

"It's like a dream," I say bending into another shot. "Like a dream you can't ever wake up from."

Boomer ignores this and makes sure that people are still interested. He was good like that — keeping it fun, keeping it about himself.

"I hit another one today," he says with his mouth into his beer glass.

I didn't need to ask because a month ago construction had displaced a natural habitat of rabbits onto our suburban streets. Now a soft crunch under your car wasn't anything to feel bad about.

"On Oviedo Street," he says. "I didn't even try to break."

There are implications in his voice here. Structures and reasons. Symptoms and effects. What I get from Boomer is that the rabbits mean something. That their dislodgment



and further eradication feels both large and symbolic. And my aversion to this feeling means something else.

"Boom," I slap my hand against the railing like a tire was hitting a rabbit. "Poor little feller. Oh well. Good nights make for bad mornings," and I tilt my pint way back.

Boomer glances at the hotish bartender again. The same way a child star used to be famous, this girl used to be hot. He chugs the rest of his beer and shuffles over to her. The face he makes says, "Hey baby," and the face she makes says, "Please, don't ever call me baby. Now what would you like." Hers is a beatable defense mechanism and his is a wolf in sheep's ignorance. His face says, "There's no need for that baby. I'm not like them." And hers says, "Oh yeah, I've seen that face before."

This scene is another in a collage I'm too bored to back up from to see what image it forms and so I look for another. Through the window are kids — kids who I used to not call kids — which is to say, when I was their age, a young high school something, I did not consider myself young.

The obviousness of this statement pains me so much that I make it so it wasn't me but one of the kids who said it. I name her Kristi. There's more of them, idling in the parking lot, sitting in the bed of a truck, but all I name is Kristi. I pretend that she's different. I give her experiences and knowledge beyond her years. I add mystery to her character and put depth in her eyes.

"The take away message I got from my ex," Boomer's next to me again, now with a full glass of beer, "is that morning people are show-offs."

Kristi sits in the bed of the truck like she wants it to drive her away. I make it so it does and she travels cross country and when she returns she returns to this parking lot to this very same spot in the same bed of the same truck a completely different person.

"I'm not ready to get up yet. Ya know? Stop showing me that you can."

After the trip, the way Kristi sits is with her insecurities held outstretched in her hands. She leaves them open, for all to see, as if confident that there was nothing there to find that she hadn't found already.

"Are you listening man?" he asks.

"What? Who?" I say.

"Actually," he says, "Never mind. I've got to tinkle."

I look to Boomer as he crosses the bar and it's not reflection that I see. It's the negative of a photograph, a rigged comparison where I color only myself in. It occurs to me that yes, I use Boomer, and, in the same way, he uses me too. It occurs to me that this news is not surprising, and then it occurs to me that knowing this does not change things.

I call out loud enough for everyone to hear, "Is there a no-homo equivalent for creepy?"

He looks back, half way across the room.

"Like ... can I say no-creepy and still get away with it?"

Boomer shakes his head no, there is not, but asking the question, I feel like it's accomplished the same thing. I prop the cue against the table, make a stop at the bar, and start out for the parking lot.

The fat bouncer saw this and didn't like it — something about leaving the bar with an open beer in your hand — and he made it clear with his big gut invading my personal space.

"Where do you think you're going?" The fat bouncer says as I'm out the door. "Hey!" he calls out.

It's glowing light in the parking lot, where the buzzing to the street lamps is a constant and distances are merging black around the pavement. At the length of my focus is Kristi.

My approach to them is quick and unassuming. Their attention was drawn by the yell of the fat bouncer and so it feels like they're counting each of my steps. When I arrive I look back to the bar to make sure someone's still watching.

"Are you ok?" One of them says so I know to turn to the orange light encircling us.

"Oh. Yea," I say, forgetting the words I had planned. "I was just wondering..."

"What's going on? What's the matter?" A male voice says, maybe to me. I don't really know.

"No," I say. "Nothing's the matter. I just have something for you."

"Is everything alright?" Chimes in another, mostly for safety reasons.

"Yea man, don't worry," I reassure.

By the look on their faces, I don't really reassure.

"Is he drunk?" they ask.

"No," I answer. "Well, yes. But I just have something for you."

The general consensus becomes that I'm drunk and a freak and so I was to be afraid of.

"Well, not really for you. But I have something for someone?" I was not making it better.

I find the words and slip into a script. Not looking at her but addressing the whole of the group, I ask, "Would Kristi like a beer?"

They look between each other.

"Who's Kristi?" a voice says after enough time elapses.

"I was just wondering if Kristi drinks." I showcase the beer. "And if so, would Kristi like this beer?"

"Dude, there's no Kristi here," one of them says.

I look directly at her, into her eyes, and what I say is, "Yes, I know this. And that doesn't change things." I swing the beer back in a gesture like I'm going to chug it. I try, but can't, and the beer spills out the corners of my mouth. Wiping my chin, ganging back the vomit, I forget this happened and replace it with me asking Kristi her real name. She told me Stacy.

I place the beer on the asphalt in one final gesture and turn towards my car. Mine's parked next to Boomers. He's behind the glass in the bar watching. I wave to him, and he raises up his arms, confused.

The drive home is through a combination of streets lined with rabbits aglow in the lamp light. Their intestines burst open, a deep orange burned against the dark road; I avoid the guts with my eyes, which makes me hit a few with my car.

In my room, I keep candles in empty wine bottles on some shelves. I do this for the drip effect. When lit, the wax is supposed to drip down the bottles and harden along the sides in different colored strands. Before I left for the bar tonight, I had lit some new ones. What I now realize looking at them, is that what I had bought were non-drip candles.

To get the desired effect, I take a lighter to the body of candles and start burning.



photo KELLY RIGGLE

art CHARLES ANDREW SEATON









art **IMOGEN FIELD BANKS**





art JOSEPH DE SOSA

art SCOTT EDDINGTON

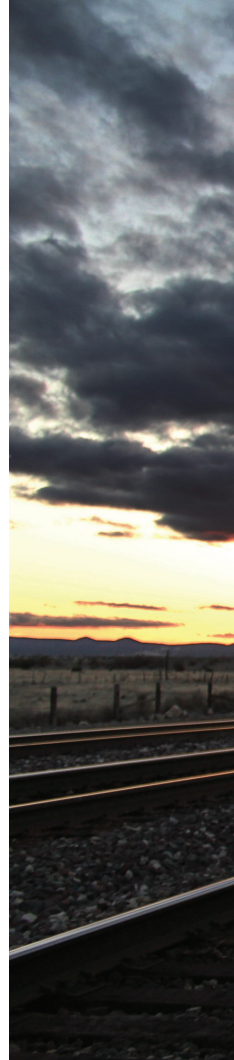






photo **QUINN MOTICKA**



art **FRED SPROAT**





art JULIAN WATTS



# STUDY BREAK

words **MAX MILLER**

Cluttering this cloistered cell  
I sift through ditch after ditch  
to unearth the bound remains of knowledge.  
The irony of being self-committed  
is not lost on my weary thoughts  
as my brain claws vainly  
at muddy white pages,  
muddy white pages  
that all seem muddy  
white, ages of them,  
muddy...

And like a poorly oiled front shovel I stall—  
abandoning this burden  
I ghost from my desk

to float along the barren aisles, dry creek beds  
of obliterated wholesale fabric.  
My eyes vacantly decode the scuffed legacy  
of shoe soles. Studious tilling of scholar-feet  
erodes the Reference section's floor  
like a fine trickle on stone,  
eons of unanswered questions, data  
driving library foundations deeper into topsoil  
one search at a time. I step in silence  
from canyon to canyon of certainty stacked high  
until I reach a sterile door,  
a gendered portrait flatly denying me entrance.  
I take its meaning and drift further down the wall.  
Finding a correct bathroom, I tip open the door

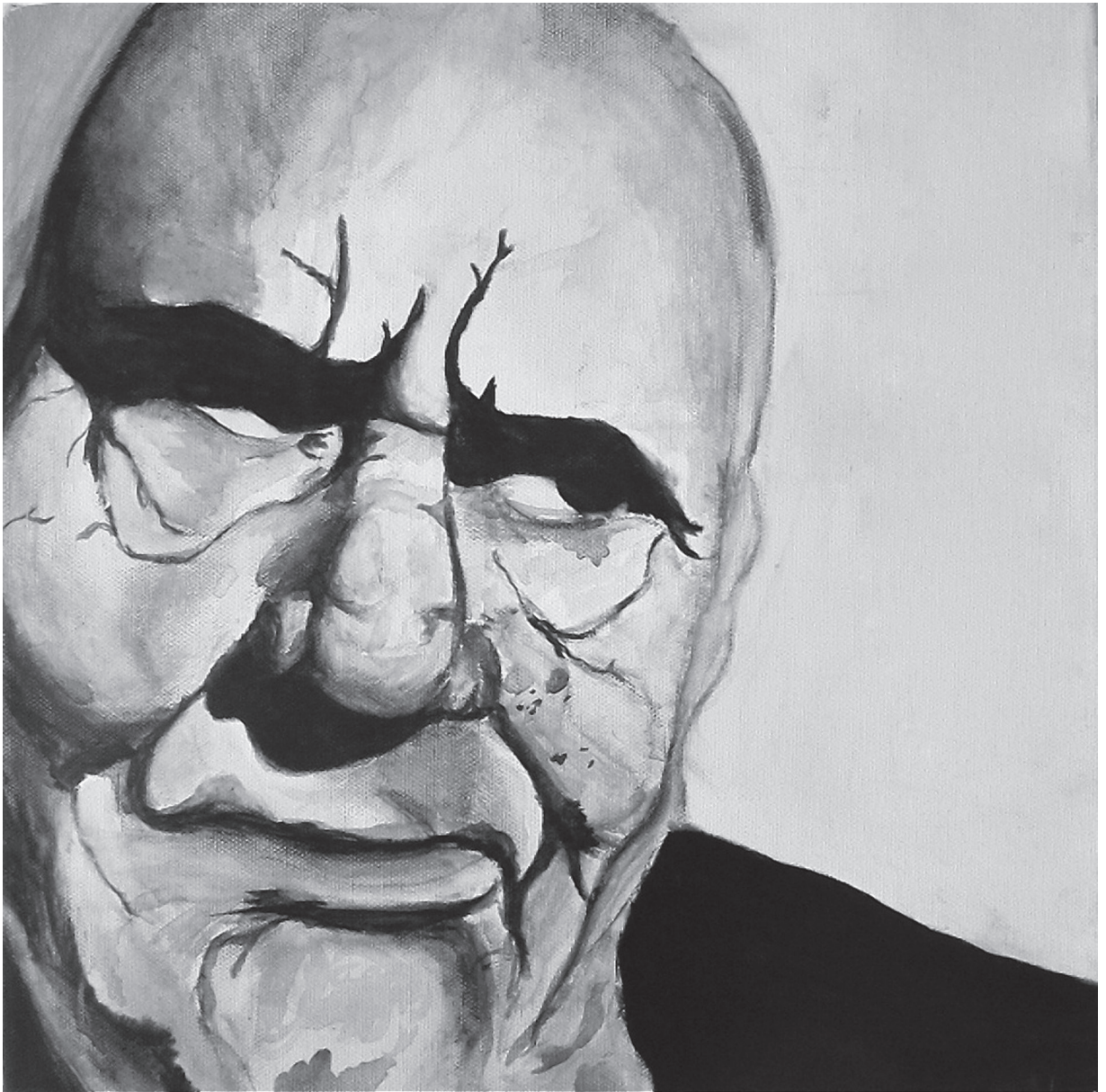
and wade into the halogen's buzzing current,  
veering toward the most solitary stall.  
Pale jittery lights are foiled voyeurs as I sit  
shitting and wondering, this idleness  
an island of sanctuary  
set on carved marble and hand-shaped bricks,  
harassed daily by the vast, tectonic churning of  
congealed feces,  
shores trampled endlessly under the flow of  
learned heels;  
on the toilet paper box, a scribbled illumination:  
*So much for all the crap you know...*

At this hour of the night  
the flush is always an existential enema;  
the crisp, audible gnash of rushing water, the  
guttural reprieve;  
the stale, tall walls and door on flimsy hinges  
like being released from a mental ward  
after the lobotomy—dazed by the toilet's  
cavernous hiss  
I shuffle to the porcelain-mounted spout  
and sterilize my sensibilities.  
The granite grid reminds me of my own scuffing  
feet  
as I cross the threshold of stark tiles

to those balding, mud-grey hollows. Picking up  
my heels,  
I dart back into the valley of excavated volumes—  
quiet,  
unfazed amid all the answers ever written.

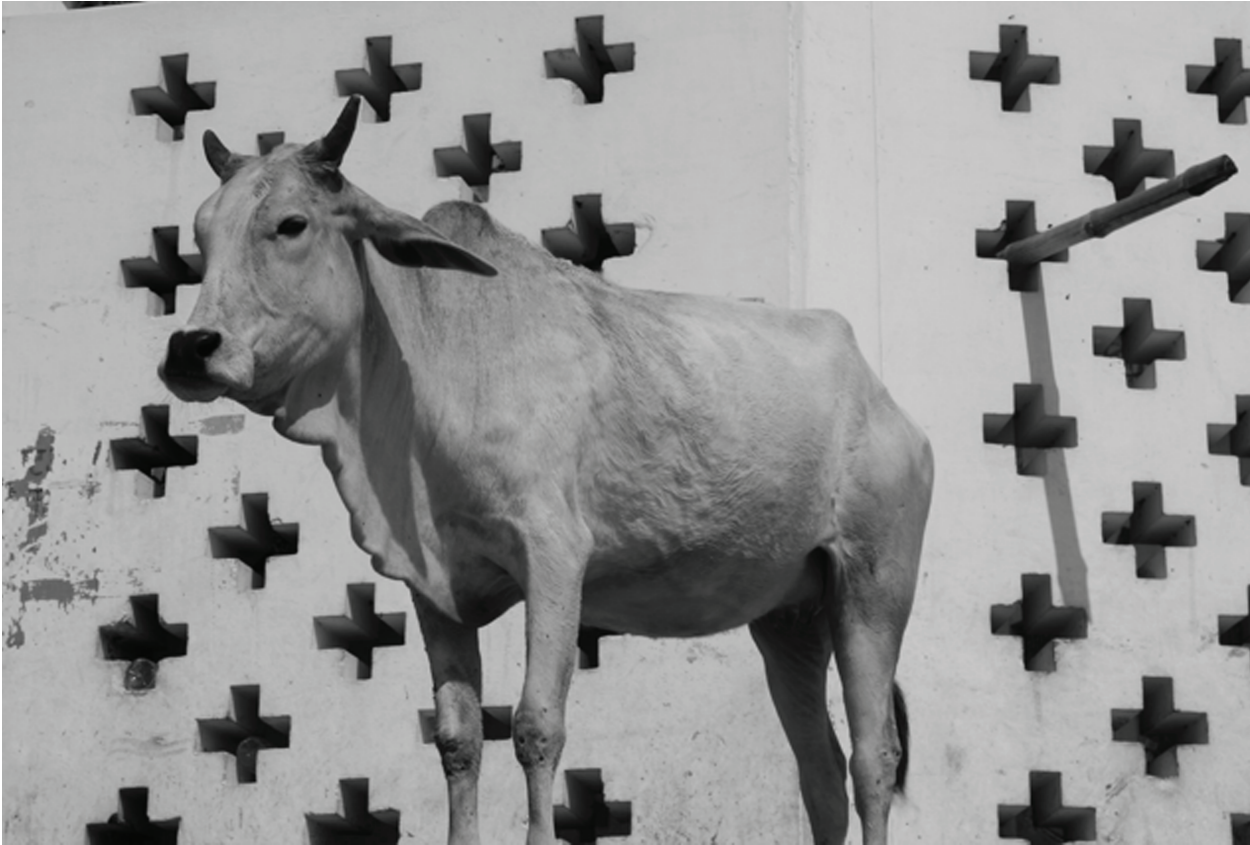






art **MACKENZIE PRIEST**

photo **TRISTAN PETTIGREW**







art **TAYLOR JOHNSTON**





art TAYLOR WILSON







## UNDER IRIDESCENT GREEN

words **JORDAN CHESNUT**

In our canoe, we are tucked like a pupil  
between two wooden eyelids  
blinking upward at a stippled night sky.  
No longer anchored by thick mud,  
we slip from blackened red mangrove trees  
and trail phosphorescence  
like some water-bound meteor.

Biologists say plankton ignite,  
spark-plug pop, flash moonlight,  
wink like people at touch and movement.  
I watch a gauze white body dive from a boat,  
breach, and hover on the waters lip  
suspended by the bay's watery glow—  
*Bioluminescence*, the Spaniard's devil.

My toe tips outward and traces a neon figure eight—  
oxygen pushes light from particles and  
I know it is not *El Diablo*, but I remember a dream  
perhaps from when I was younger  
where people are electric too,  
then fade, diffuse,  
slip back together  
into a deep pool...

"Seguimiento a todo el mundo!"  
I clutch my paddle and push to shore.

art **MYLECE BURLING**

## DORM LAUNDRY IS A REAL SON OF A BITCH

words **WILL PAUGH**

You walk down three flights of stairs to check if the machines are open, and you walk back up three flights of stairs if they are. You grab your dirty unmentionables and lug them down. On your journey you pray that you don't run into anyone of the opposite sex, it would be a terrible thing if they knew you had dirty clothes, wouldn't it. After loading the sticky old washing machine you take a look around. The bucket to on the floor catches a liquid from the ceiling that you hope is water. Your only companions in this lonely room are the forgotten thongs and panties, strung along the pipes above you. How inviting.

It takes 40 minutes for the "high speed" washer to finish, but all of the dryers are already full. Of course they are, its midnight and that just happens to be your luck. It's tempting to replace the clothes in the dryer with your own, but the thought of someone walking in on you with a handful of their pink panties is horrifying. Besides, you're supposed to be an adult now, why not try a little patience. After 20 minutes of waiting around and pretending to read a book, you attempt to imagine what kind of monster would make you wait this long. Who could possibly live with cutting into your masturbation and videogame time?

In she walks, her Uggs shuffling across the concrete floor. Your eyes meet and despite your deep hatred for her, you smile politely. In return you are greeted with pure disgust. Her face scrunches, making it clear that your mere presence is disturbing. After all you have earned it, being a real asshole sitting alone. She looks you up and she looks you down, nope nothing of value. If the displeased look isn't enough to convince you that she is an awful person, the "ugh" she sends your way proves it. This is the type of groan usually reserved for roadkill or shit on the sidewalk, but on this special day it's all you, champ. As she turns around, it's not clear what sorority the Greek lettering on her sweatshirt indicates; naturally your best guess is the house notorious for loose sexual morals and terrible laundry habits. She seals the next half hour of your life in this dank room by starting the dryers a second time. Typical.

It's just really too bad that she left her liquid detergent in the room with you, also that you happen to have an unnatural amount of blue ink pens in your backpack. You're surprised at how much ink one little pen holds, let alone the three that you pour into her liquid Tide. 2 a.m. is the time you finish your laundry. You slept very well that night, dreaming of the lovely day you will spot someone on the street wearing Lulu Lemons, splotted with wonderful shades of blue.

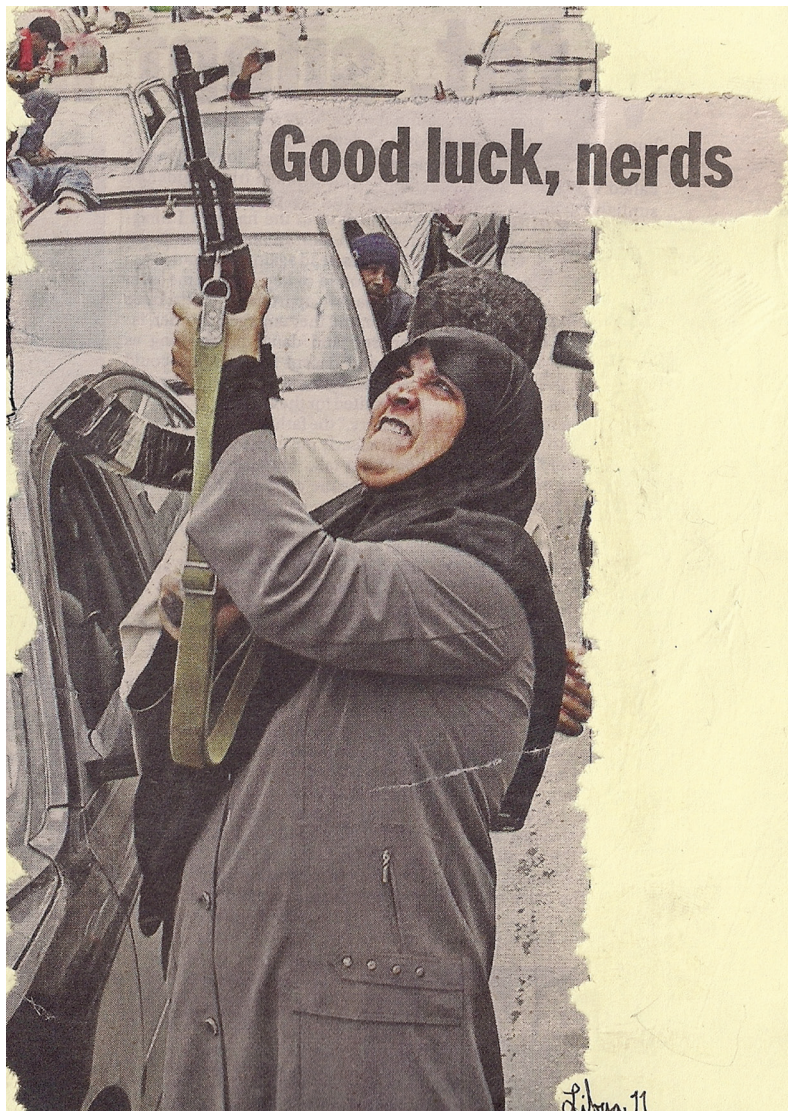






art TAYLOR JOHNSTON





art **JULIAN EARNEST**





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